

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the above amendments is courteously solicited.

For convenience to the examiner, Applicants present herein below amended claim 13 with the appropriate reference numerals.

13 (currently amended) A method for forming a molded article, which comprises: providing an outer plastic film layer 62 having an outer surface 64 and an inner surface 66; depositing a first plastic layer 68 on said outer plastic film, with said first plastic layer 68 having an outer surface 70 and an inner surface 72, and adhering the outer surface 70 of the first plastic layer 68 to the inner surface 66 of the outer plastic film 62; forming a melt of resin having reinforcing fibers mixed therein and depositing the melt as a second plastic layer 74 on said first plastic layer 68, wherein said second plastic layer 74 contains long fibers 80 having a length of from 8 to 100 mm admixed therein, and wherein said second plastic layer 74 has an outer surface 76 and an inner surface 78, and adhering the outer surface 76 of the second plastic layer 74 to the inner surface 72 of the first plastic layer 68; and compression molding said layers into a compression molded, shaped article having a layered structure.

Claim 13 as amended clearly defines over U.S. Patent 6,287,687 cited and applied by the Examiner in his office action of October 1, 2003. Claim 13 has been amended so as to clearly set forth that the second plastic layer which is deposited on the first plastic layer is formed from a melt of resin having reinforcing fibers mixed therein and that the compression molded, shaped article has a layered structure. It is respectfully submitted that the teachings of the '678 patent fail to teach, disclose, suggest or render obvious the method as now claimed in amended independent claim 13.

In the method of amended claim 13, reinforcing fibers are mixed in a melt of molding resin and applied either sequentially or by coextrusions onto a film for forming. In Spengler, synthetic and natural fibers are mixed, woven or needled to form a matrix. Two fiber matrices, one on top and one on the bottom, are placed in a lay-up with a foamed core. The lay-up is then heated with pressure during which step a portion of the polymer fibers are melted and flow to bond the composite together. Alternatively, the matrices are preconsolidated with heat and pressure and then layed up with the foam core in a stack to shape and bond under heat and pressure. At col. 2 line 34 Spengler refers to ...natural fibers intermixed with ‘thermoplastic’ material. The thermoplastic material is then defined as thermoplastic fibers in line 35. It would not be obvious that the ‘thermoplastic material’ of Spengler could be deposited by the method as claimed in claim 13 to achieve a layered structure as claimed. Further, claim 13 defines a second layer containing “long fibers” which is totally different from the foam core (no reinforcing fiber content) of Spengler.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 13 patetnably defines over the art of record, particularly the ‘678 patent and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

It is further submitted that the dependent claims 14-20 contain patentable merit in their own right while the Spengler ‘678 patent does show a multilayered structure, the structure does not render obvious the layered structure claimed in dependent claims 14-20. Spengler does not teach providing fibers in the second plastic layer. In Spengler, the second layer comprises a foam core having no reinforcing fibers.

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that all of the claims as pending patently define over the art of record and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein patently define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

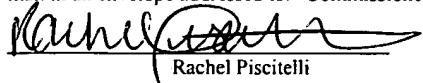
Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on December 31, 2003.


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